



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A NOVEL PHASE OF MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

By Gustav Kobbé

THE uses to which the great fortunes of this country are put differ, like the manner in which they were made, from those of other countries and other times. Of splurge there is little. Mere exhibition of brute wealth no longer fascinates exhibitor or looker-on. Nor, a distinguished Italian writer to the contrary, has the luxury of the wealthy American home anything in common with the disintegrating indulgence that preceded the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. For example, the wealthy American has developed a passion for fine pictures; but it is safe to say that not in one of the many fine paintings, some of them costing fortunes and brought here because the American is willing to outbid collectors of all other nationalities, is there a trace of the degenerate. It seems as if the contact with material things necessary to the development of the country had, by natural process of reaction, bred in those who have played a part in it, a profound love of sheer and noble beauty.

Pictures are the most obvious because the most heralded expression of this love of beauty. But music is another. The opera, conducted here on a scale as nowhere else; orchestras depending for their support upon endowment or guarantee, show what might be called the "collective" interest in the art.

But now the American's individual interest is asserting itself more and more in a love for music under his own roof-tree, and this has resulted in an adaptation to home purposes of an instrument of ancient and noble traditions, but so large and, I may add, so expensive that its use, before the wealthy American came upon the scene had been confined to churches and concert halls.

I refer to the pipe organ. Its adaptation on a large scale to use in private residences is due to American ingenuity stimulated in turn by the wealth that has made its installation in private houses possible. The subject is of peculiar interest to this magazine which numbers among its partons more than one owner of these superb and sightly instruments, and incidentally this is believed to be the first article on the subject that has appeared in any untechnical periodical.

In England the organ has been cultivated much longer than here. There is an English school of church music; the English are fond of oratorio and in their churches they listen to music with what may be described as ecclesiastical ears. They listen to the organ. The American church goer waits impatiently for the soprano. In England small pipe organs for private use have been built for years. But they are nothing more than small church organs, with all the defects a church organ must have when placed in a private residence, where there are no distances to smooth and mellow the tone.

The adaptation which long and careful experiment has developed in this country remedies these defects, a fact recognized in England itself. In the gallery at Saffron Walden,

where in the middle ages the minstrels sang, Lord Howard de Walden has installed an American chamber organ; Lord Curzon has one at Basingstoke; Lord Islington at Corsham; the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire at Charlton Park; the Duke of Westminster at Eaton Hall. "Chamber organ", it should be noted, is not a happy descriptive term for these large pipe organs, since it tends mentally to circumscribe their dimensions, whereas clever installation which utilizes waste spaces, so that size has ceased to be a disconcerting factor, is one of the features of the American adaptation of the pipe organ to private residences.

No; it need not be the size, but it must be the quality of tone in which church and chamber organ differ, for the chamber organ requires a refinement of tone and a perfection of articulation which the church organ lacks, in fact does not need. The vox humana of a church organ may sound like two saws working against each other to the player at the manual, yet float down from afar like a voice from heaven to where the congregation sits. People speak of the magnificent church organs of England, of the noble diapason, of the superb volume of sound. But in point of fact it is the magnificent buildings, their noble proportions and the superb distances sound has to travel before it reaches the listener that produce the effect. What at the organ bench is the roughest and rawest kind of a stop is mellowed by the vast space through which it has to travel and by the distance from which it reaches the congregation. When you install what merely is a small church organ in a private house, you install

the defects of a church organ and not even on a smaller scale, because, while the instrument is small, the space is smaller too and the defects proportionately more perceptible.

Of course an organ is an organ, whether built for church, concert hall or home; but the great distinction of the chamber organ built in this country is its refinement of tone and the perfection of its mechanism. Even in the largest residence foyer, hall, salon, music room or library, the distance from the organ to the listener is slight as compared with that through which the sound travels in church. The chamber organ is an intimate instrument in which every defect of tone and mechanism can at once be detected. Therefore, these defects have to be eliminated and because of the time and care required to eliminate them, the chamber organ is the more expensive instrument. Its growing use, in spite of this, is due to the American tendency to have the best or nothing. A skillful builder of church organs almost always is sure to produce a good organ, but unless he has had years of experience in building organs for private residences, the instrument he produces will be deficient for its special purpose. Even if he has realized that the tone of a chamber organ must attain the very acme of refinement and its mechanism be letter perfect, so that it work in absolute silence—no disturbing click, rasp or rattle of action—and even if he knew enough to charge for these things in his estimate, he would lack the experience necessary to produce them; and though he started with the best intentions soon would be obliged to stop short of their attainment, or face bankruptcy. Probably the properly de-

signed and constructed chamber organ costs—and should cost—twice as much as a church organ of the same size.

Refinement of tone is of course a matter of a refined, musical ear and persistence in making the tone correspond to what such an ear demands. It is work, listen and adjust over and over again, until the pipes are scaled and voiced to the degree of refinement made necessary by the intimacy of the surroundings in which the instrument is to be heard. It is possible to voice a pipe by rule and put it in an organ, but that is not individual voicing. When it is considered that the largest chamber organ in the world has 6,135 pipes, some idea is gained of the labor involved in their proper scaling and voicing and in securing the correct proportion of power as between the various tones themselves.

But it is the letter-perfect mechanism, the silent articulation of all mechanical parts—the absence as I have said of click, rasp or rattle, let alone wheeze—that makes one of the greatest differences between church and chamber organs. Oddly enough, the perfect articulation of the chamber organ has developed from a mechanical contrivance that professional musicians at first looked down on. This is the “player”, corresponding to the “player-attachement” on pianos and enabling the owner to play the organ himself. It is not every purchaser of an organ who can play it “by hand”, and while he usually can afford a private organist there are times when he wants to play it himself. The “player” was invented for his benefit. But it also makes possible the performance of music so complicated and difficult that it is wholly beyond

the power of the most expert organist, and, to be effective, wholly beyond the ordinary church organ. For example, no organist can play Tschaikovsky's "Pathetic Symphony"; the "player" can—if the organ is letter-perfect in mechanism. And of course this perfection of mechanism makes the organ all the more beautiful to play on by hand. In other words the perfection demanded by the once despised "player," has made the organ a better instrument for playing on by hand than the organ built for that purpose alone.

Of course it goes without saying that the large chamber organ not only has the pure organ tone but all the stops that give full orchestral effects, including chimes and harp. The largest chamber organ ever built has a 32 foot double open diapason stop of 30 pipes, a noble foundation for any organ anywhere. Like practically all the large instruments built for residences it has the echo organ. Usually the manual console is placed near the organ itself, the "player" console at a distance, so that the performer is also in a position of a listener, an arrangement made possible by electrical appliances. A "player" can be put anywhere and attachments run from it to the organ; and in one residence "players" actually are placed in every important room in the house so that the organ can be played from any one of these.

The problem of properly installing a chamber organ has been successfully solved and in as many different ways as it is presented. There are houses in which only the consoles are in the room where the organ is played. They are connected by electricity with the instrument, which is completely

out of sight, sometimes even in an unused space on the floor above. In one residence the echo organ is in the billiard room below and the sound comes up through a conduit to an opening in the ceiling of the room where the main organ is, an arrangement which intensifies its mysterious beauty. Decoratively the chamber organ is treated according to the period of the room and the pipes can be visible or screened, as taste requires.

The installation of large chamber organs has opened up a new field for organists. Many of the wealthy men who have bought organs also have engaged organists to play for their special delectation. A good organist who is fortunate enough to be engaged by men of this class can make more out of such an engagement than out of his church salary and recitals combined. The people who buy these organs are accustomed to hear the best, want the best, and are willing to pay for it. The concern that is recognized as, *par excellence*, the builder of large chamber organs constantly is in receipt of letters requesting it to recommend organists to play in the house and offering more for the three winter or summer months—for many organs are installed in country seats—than a high-class organist would receive from his church for the whole year.

But to the owner who cannot play the organ by hand, the “player” means everything. It gives him complete grasp, perfect command of the instrument; and in this way he is able, through music, to secure entire relaxation from the day’s work. It is a case of the world forgotten—including Wall

Street; and that is the main reason why so many of the "big people" are putting in chamber organs. It is their wealth that has made the development of the chamber organ along the lines of tone refinement and letter-perfect mechanism possible. Fortunate the builder who does work for such men. The church that wants an organ has a committee. The man who buys a chamber organ is his own committee.